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Letter dated 2 December 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 2 December 2005, addressed to you by Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 24, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Baki **İlkin**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 2 December 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The constitutional referendum concluded, Iraq is nearing yet another crucial phase of its political transition. With the general elections in sight, I thought it might be useful to share some observations with Your Excellency.

I agree with your view that "the people of Iraq have braved difficult conditions and the threat of violence to exercise their right to vote", and that "the referendum has been an important opportunity for the Iraqi people to express their political choices".

The compromise reached shortly before the referendum opened the possibility for further improvement of the new Constitution after the elections. This has been a welcome move on the part of the political leadership of Iraq that provided additional time and room for the new Iraqi Parliament that will emerge from the 15 December elections to tackle this vital issue.

I believe the current situation calls from closer cooperation within the international community. Turkey remains firmly committed to preservation of Iraq's unity and territorial integrity through a peaceful, democratic and stable Government.

The United Nations, through the leadership of Your Excellency and your Special Representative, has been able to guide the process towards democratic governance in Iraq until now with limited capabilities and under most difficult circumstances.

United Nations involvement in the period ahead will become even more important. The 15 December elections can be the turning point in legitimizing the political transformation in the minds of each and every segment of Iraqi society, if prepared and conducted successfully.

As you have rightly said, the willingness of the United Nations to work in partnership with the Government to assist the Iraqi people in whatever way possible remains a key element for the success of the process. This, we believe, requires a more robust and extensive United Nations presence in all phases of the forthcoming elections, including the effective monitoring of the entire process. This expected United Nations effort surely needs to be supported by the United Nations members and other international organizations, which we are simultaneously calling for. The international community must do everything within its power to avoid the recurrence of the manipulations and irregularities which marred the previous two ballotings in Iraq this year and to help ensure that, at long last, nobody will feel disenfranchised from the process.

Kirkuk remains a divisive issue which has the potential to turn into a serious source of instability and conflict. The future parliament of Iraq will have to address this sensitive issue. We believe United Nations involvement in the last phase of the Iraqi political transition needs to include Kirkuk. The establishment of a United Nations office in that city would be extremely useful.

The ability of the United Nations to deliver on these expectations will bestow on the emerging constitutional statehood in Iraq the direly needed legitimacy which, over time, will also help end violence.

(*Signed*) Abdullah **Gül**